

Congresswoman Loretta Sanchez (CA-47), Vice Chair of the House Committee on Homeland Security, and a bi-partisan group of Southern California lawmakers sent a letter yesterday to the Administrator for the Transportation Security Administration, John Pistole. Along with Representatives Ed Royce, Adam Schiff, Lucille Roybal-Allard, Brian Bilbray, and Bob Filner, Rep Sanchez strongly opposes proposed changes by Transportation Security Administration (TSA) to the Transit Security Grant Program (TSGP).

TSA intends to cut security funding for transit systems to parts of the United States like Southern California and redistribute to the Northern and Eastern parts of the United States. The new proposal would skew funding to areas in the East and would allocate funds to selected Top 50 critical transportation targets. Out of this list, Los Angeles and San Francisco would be the only Western transportation agencies to be guaranteed funds. Less and less money would be available to transit agencies throughout Southern California, thereby compromising resources available to law enforcement and first responders in our community.

**“These grants are a vital part of ensuring transit security,” Rep. Sanchez said “these proposed changes seem to come from a deeply flawed idea that threats to US transportation can only happen east of the Mississippi. Southern California should have the same access to these funds as any other region of the US.”**

The Honorable Bennie Thompson, Chair of the House Committee on Homeland Security was also sent a copy of this letter. A full copy of the letter can be found below:

Dear Administrator Pistole:

The Transportation Security Administration (TSA) is proposing to change the allocation of funding in the Transit Security Grant Program (TSGP) for FY2011 in a way that will concentrate most of the available funding to transit systems in urban areas located in the North and East of the United States. This administrative redistribution will severely reduce or eliminate available security funding to transit systems in the Western part of the United States, including Southern

California, and lessen the protection of the communities they serve.

Since 2005, the TSGP is the only homeland security grant program administered by Federal Emergency Management Agency's (FEMA) Grant Programs Directorate. It provides needed antiterrorism funding to transit agencies operating within the highest risk urban areas of the nation. As you know, TSGP funds are distributed to high risk regions based on ongoing intelligence assessments and analysis of risks. Developed over the past several years, this process has fostered regional partnerships and collaboration among transit agencies, security providers, and local first responders, and has elevated the safety and security of the nation's transit systems and their riders.

Under the current TSGP regional allocation plan, transit agencies located in the North and East are already receiving the majority of the funding available nationwide. For FY 2010, transit systems in the North and East were allocated 76 percent of the total TSGP funds available nationally with only 4 percent allocated to transit systems in Southern California.

For FY 2011, TSA has proposed to further alter this nationwide distribution, and shift even more TSGP funding to transit systems in the North and East by promoting a list of "Top 50" critical transportation targets (approximately 62 sites). Within this list, only two assets are located west of the Mississippi, one in Los Angeles and one in San Francisco. As a result, the vast majority of the funding will be distributed to targets in areas such as Chicago, Washington, D.C., Boston, Philadelphia, New York and New Jersey. Such a distorted distribution will further skew funding to those transit systems which have already received the bulk of the TSGP funding over the past several years.

Although specific distribution details have yet to be announced, transit systems and projects which do not receive funding through the "Top 50" target list will be forced to compete nationally for any TSGP funds that remain. This will leave many transit systems throughout the nation vulnerable, even though they have already been identified by DHS as high risk systems with significant needs. Further, the regional allocations that have fostered collaboration and joint partnerships in the past are not being proposed as part of the new FY 2011 program.

Over the past several years, transit properties throughout Southern California have actively worked together to reduce the security risk to their systems and the communities they serve by utilizing TSGP funds in accordance with threat and vulnerability assessments approved by DHS and through Regional Transit System Security Plans established by the TSGP. The proposed

changes to the FY 2011 TSGP would severely reduce or eliminate the continued availability of needed security funds to the Southern California region, while discouraging the regional collaboration needed to leverage limited resources and successfully deter, respond to, and recover from a terrorist event.

We oppose TSA's proposed changes to the TSGP funding distribution for FY 2011, and request that TSA not implement these proposed actions in this regard.□

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*Congresswoman Loretta Sanchez is proud to represent California's 47<sup>th</sup> Congressional District, which includes the cities of Anaheim, Garden Grove, Santa Ana, and parts of Fullerton in Orange County. She serves as Vice Chair of the House Homeland Security Committee and Chair of the House Armed Services Subcommittee on Terrorism, Unconventional Threats, and Capabilities. Rep. Sanchez is also a member of the fiscally conservative Blue Dog Coalition and sits on the bipartisan, bicameral Joint Economic Committee.*